

B R O B D I N G N A G

 Brobdingnag #79

1966AV S '10

5 January 1968

Game 1966AV

Spring 1910

BRITISH FLEET LOST AT CORFU GERMAN FLEET SCUTTLED IN BALTIC

The moves:

ENGLAND (Wells): Army Liverpool to Wales. Fleet London to English Channel. Fleet English Channel to Mid-Atlantic Ocean. Fleet Edinburgh to North Sea. Fleet Denmark to Baltic. Fleet Kiel support fleet Denmark to Baltic. Army Burgundy to Munich. Army Ruhr support army Burgundy to Munich. Fleet Marseilles to Piedmont. Army Brest to Paris. Fleet Greece to Ionian Sea. Fleet Tyrrhenian Sea support fleet Greece to Ionian Sea. Fleet Tunis support fleet Greece to Ionian Sea. Fleet Ankara to Constantinople. Army Sweden stand. Fleet St. Petersburg (north coast) stand.

RUSSIA (Zelazny): Army Smyrna to Armenia. Army Bulgaria to Constantinople. Fleet Sevastopol to Black Sea. Fleet Ionian Sea to Greece. Fleet Aegean Sea support fleet Ionian Sea to Greece. Army Serbia to Bulgaria. Army Silesia support GERMAN army Munich. Army Warsaw to Prussia. Army Moscow to Warsaw. Game master Ralston to Siberia. (I think, on the contrary, that it is Siberia that has come to Ralston. It was sixteen below zero last night.)

GERMANY (Shagrin): No moves received. Armies Munich, Vienna, Tyrolia, Livonia stand. Fleet Baltic stand.

ITALY (Francis): Army Albania support RUSSIAN fleet Ionian Sea to Greece. Army Trieste stand. Army Rome to Venice. Fleet Naples to Tyrrhenian Sea.

Underlined moves do not succeed. The English fleet Greece is annihilated as it was dislodged and has no available retreat. Similarly, the German fleet Baltic is annihilated, being dislodged and having received no orders. There are no other retreats. Deadline for moves for Fall is Tuesday, 23 January 1968.

Rating Lists

In BROB #77 a table is given showing the amount of agreement, or lack of it, between the various rating lists. The Glockorla Mean Rate of Growth Rating List had to be omitted from the comparison due to lack of a recent complete version of it. This has now been remedied: Glock #13 contains an updated version of its Rating List. It included the recently completed 1966AK (in Big Brother, winner Zelazny) but not 1966AQ (in BROB, winner Reinsel), putting it at the same point of progress as the other lists considered; although, of course, there are slight differences in games considered between any pair of lists, and the Peery listing does not consider specific games, as such, at all.

A revised table, including the Glock Rating List, is given below. It will be noticed that the correlations listed for the other pairs differ slightly from those in the previously published table. This is because three players, previously considered, Naus, Peery, and Swenson, are not given in the Glock list, and the computation has been re-done, including only the twenty players rated on all five listings. The changes are relatively small, however.

	<u>Peery</u> <u>Poll</u>	<u>BROB</u> <u>Comp</u>	<u>BROB</u> <u>Curr</u>	<u>Big</u> <u>Bro.</u>	<u>Glock</u> <u>MRG</u>	
Peery Poll	1	.613	.781	.523	.724	.746
BROB Completed	.613	1	.806	.903	.630	.805
BROB Current	.781	.806	1	.680	.720	.805
Big Brother	.523	.903	.680	1	.580	.760
Glockorla	.724	.630	.720	.580	1	.745

It will be noticed that the Glock listing, while showing reasonable agreement with all the other listings, does not have a particularly high correlation with any one of them. For some reason, not clear to me, it agrees more closely with the games-in-progress listings (Peery Poll and BROB Current Game) than with the completed game listings (Big Brother and BROB Completed), although it is, itself, a completed game listing.

The final column of the table gives a measure of the agreement of each of the listings with the consensus of them all.

The latest issue of Jutland Jollies, #7, calls for a poll of all players, to determine which of the existing or proposed ratings lists is preferred, with the suggestion that that one be regarded as official. Would anything be gained by such a move? Players who regard a win as the important thing, far overshadowing any difference between survivors and those eliminated, will continue to regard a listing that puts major emphasis on a win as the best; presumably, the only present list that they will pay much attention to is the Big Brother one, which calls itself "official" anyhow. Those, on the other hand, who regard second places and the like as significant, will probably prefer the BROB or the Glock listings which give more recognition to the "place", and "show" positions. It seems to me that all the listings serve some purpose, and all of them will continue publication anyhow; so any attempt to reduce the number of listings is rather futile. Incidentally, if I had to choose a single Rating List to survive, my vote would be for the Big Brother one, not for my own; but I still think that the BROB lists are of some interest, as are the others. I wish, though, that Bob Lake would conduct his suggested poll: if nothing else the response would show if there is any real interest in rating lists at all.

Sealed Bag.

Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th St., Long Island City, N.Y., 11104.

I have several questions about your rating system. First, do you assign points in respect to the survival of the nation or of the player in the game? Case in point: in Big Brother #2, I was in the game longer than MacKenzie, but his England lasted longer than my France. Second, what is the ruling regarding substitutes? Third, what is the ruling when one player plays a certain country and is wiped out, and then is sent in as a substitute in the same game (example, 1966AM in ADAG where I played and lost as both England and Turkey, unpleasant even if I was sent in as a sub. to command one sole English fleet in Portugal of all places)?

You should make some distinction between the laurels and lumps that are received ((as an ordinary player)) and from being sent in as a replacement. After all look at the crazy set ups you are sent into. I, as a replacement player, have been placed in some of the following mixed up positions:

1. 1966AM (ADAG). As a replacement player for England I had one piece, a fleet in Portugal, with German pieces in Spain and the Mid-Atlantic!!!
2. 1966BC (ADAG). As a replacement player for Turkey I stabbed my best friend who was sent in as a replacement player for Austria; as the previous players had an alliance, Austria's back was wide open so I was able to take three supply centers from him in one turn!!!
3. 1966BI (Erehwon). I was sent in as Italy with three pieces and Turkey smashing on Naples, France at the gates of Rome and Russia wiping her feet on Venice!!!
4. 1967Z (ADAG). As a sub I was placed in control of England with three pieces and French fleets in the Channel and Irish Sea, a Russian army in Norway, and a German fleet in the Helgoland Bight.
5. 1967IX (ADAG). As a sub for Austria, the Russians were in Galicia, the Italians in Trieste, the Turks moving slowly but steadily northward.
- 6., 7., 8. Etc., etc., etc.

I doubt that my fate as a sub is too happy, with the one exception of 1966BC. I also doubt that the fate of 99 out of a 100 subs will be anything but minus all the way. By marking the subs on the same basis as the starting players is to discourage those players who give up their free time to have their fates cast into a bizarre collection of possible situations, very few of which are good. We volunteer as subs because we like to play Diplomacy regardless of the situation, so why do you kick us in the teeth for our efforts?

I don't know how you could solve the question of replacement players but several possibilities are:

1. Do not count the game for the replacement player.
2. Count only those games for subs who come out on the plus side, since this is much harder than normal.
3. You could have two ratings for someone, one with sub positions added, and the other without.

Oh well. How about it?

((+For your first question. The assignment is made on the basis of the country. In the example which you quote, England, having lasted longer than France, would get the higher score; so the player credited with playing England would get a higher score than the one credited with playing France.

For your third question, a player who plays twice in the same game, once as one country, then, after being eliminated or resigning from that, as a second country, gets the sum of his scores for the two countries. For instance, if you played Austria and were the third to be eliminated, you would get a score of -2 from that cause. If after that elimination the player for Turkey resigned and you took over and became the second strongest on the board at game's end (well, we can dream, can't we?), earning +4 for that achievement, you would get +2 points for the game. All rating schemes which consider replacement players at all do the same. I was greatly amused once when a player told me that his playing two positions in succession in the same game would tie the rating system in a knot. There have been many cases of playing two positions one after the other, there was an instance of it in 1963B the second game played, and all ratings systems take this in their stride.

However, it is your second question, what is done about substitute players, which is the real core of your letter. If you will read through the correspondence columns of the issues of Graustark appearing in the summer of 1965, you will find one, or perhaps two, letters of mine which make very much the same point that you do. At that time I was in several games as a replacement player, several of them being in much the state you describe so feelingly. (though I must say I was never asked to play a country with only a single force, completely surrounded by the forces of one other power. ~~What~~ was the point of re-assigning that force in Portugal at all in 1966AM?) It was that summer that Charles Reinsel first introduced his rating list in the pages of Graustark; following his lead, there was a whole series of other suggestions for rating lists. It is obvious that the great majority of positions abandoned, whether by resignation or by desertion, are not the most desirable positions; and I pointed out in that letter to Grau that rating lists of the type then being proposed would inevitably discourage players from accepting positions as replacement players.

Long after that when I began my own rating list the question came up again as to how to treat replacements. Note that the EROB scheme is a ranking scheme: if it is to work at all there must be 7 players, no less and no more, scored for every standard full board game. The solution adopted was the following. If a country changes hands in the course of a game, and if it does poorly so that it earns

a negative score, that score is charged to the initial player for the country. If on the other hand the country does sufficiently well to earn a positive score, it is the final player for the country, the replacement player, who nets the gain. Far from kicking substitutes in the teeth, this procedure gives them every possible advantage. In fact, several months ago when John Koning and I were conducting a rather long winded correspondence on rating schemes in general, he pointed out that the way to be sure of making out all right in the BROB Rating List is to play no games except those where you are a substitute. A player who did that could never get a minus score of any sort; now and again when he managed to do well he would gain a positive score.

For your general interest, the procedure adopted for replacements in the other rating lists is summarized below.

Glockorla. Usually, when a country changes hands during the course of a game it is not counted for either player. There are two exceptions. If the country wins its score is credited to the replacement player. A replacement player, but not the initial player, may ask to have the results credited to him; this might happen, for example, if he did fairly well without winning, say getting second position or something like that. As the Glock scheme is an averaging one, a player would have to do a bit of computation in border line cases to decide whether it was worth while asking for it to be credited or not.

Big Brother. The player resigning automatically gets a score of minus one. The replacement gets whatever the country earns. If the country is eliminated he also gets -1. If it survives he gets +1, or +2, depending on strength, and, of course, he gets +7 should the country win. A player who does much substituting can be hurt under the Big Brother scheme, as many abandoned positions have little or no hope of survival.

Centre-year system, as formerly used in Euralia. Centre year points for those years that the country was in hands of initial player were credited to initial player; points for those years that country was in hands of replacement, credited to replacement. -jamcc+))

Charles Wells, 3678 Lindholm Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44120.

I like your variant suggestion ((BROB #77)). It's better for postal play, since for in person games it's one more thing to keep a record of, and too many mistakes occur now.

Your suggestions concerning rating systems ((averaging of rating points, BROB 77)) make sense.

((+(Yes, the additional record keeping is certainly a disadvantage of that variant. As to averaging it adds a complication to what to do about substitutions. At present, using a totallizing scheme, a third position, say, netting +2 points should always be given to the replacement, and not to the initial player. What happens though if we

use averages? Someone like yourself or Smythe, with a high average, might prefer not to be charged with an additional game for a mere two points, so that the points would have to go to the initial player. This rating business is getting rougher and rougher all the time. -jamcc)+))

Douglas Beyerlein, 3934 S. W. Southern, Seattle, Wash., 98116.

The basic reason I am writing this letter is because today I received a letter from John and Bjo Trimble of Oakland, Calif., with instructions on how to write letters to NBC to make sure Star Trek stays on the air in 1968. I wonder if you know these people and whether or not this effort to save Star Trek is of the highest caliber or character. If the Trimbles are reputable science fiction fans then I will do whatever I can to help, but I would like some reassurance.

((+(The Trimbles are indeed both well known and highly reputable science fiction fans. I am afraid that I am not much of a TV viewer myself. However, any readers who enjoy Star Trek and who would like to aid the campaign for its continuance should write to John and Bjo Trimble, 243 Santa Rosa Ave., Oakland, Calif., 94610, for suggestions as to how to help. -jamcc)+))

Eduard Hille, 107 SE 8th St., Gainesville, Florida, 32601.

Muchos gracias for the reply in BROB ((77)). Your proposed variant is of great interest to me. I guess I'll try to talk Monte and the rest of the gang into trying it when they're up here on the 27th of January. Anyway, I'll ask him what he thinks of the variant.

((+(Well, Ed, if you do try it out, please let me know how it worked out. Sometimes these ideas that look all right turn out to be not very good in practice. And, as Charles Wells states on the previous page, it does require a fair amount of additional record keeping. Do you ever use a Gamesmaster in those Florida get togethers of yours? I understand that some groups have found a neutral gamesmaster an advantage in over-the-board play. If you have one he could easily look after the additional clerical work involved.-jamcc)+))

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New Blood.

Kenneth Borecki, 19 Royal Road, Rockville Centre, N. Y., 11570, has written asking about Postal Diplomacy.

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